

WILLOW PARK NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING – August 27, 2008



On August 27, 2008, City of Auburn staff met with residents of the Willow Park Neighborhood in Willow Park by the gazebo, to discuss their concerns about crime, vandalism and partying by teens in their neighborhood.

City Staff in Attendance: Mayor Pete Lewis, Asst. Police Chief Bob Karnofski, Police Sgt. Jim Nordinger, Police Community Programs Officer Andy Gould and Community Services Manager Duanna Richards

Community Members in Attendance: Maury Paul, Mathew Kwastin, Craig Solbrack, Daniel McCabe, Julie and Mark Jansen, Paul Johnson, LeAnn and Robert Moen, Rich and Carol Pogers and Doug Donevan.

General Questions/Comments

- ***Is parking going to be expanded at the train station?***
It has always been intended that Sound Transit build another 450-stall parking garage on the C Street side of the railroad tracks; however, they will need additional funding to make it happen. Sound Transit have stated they have no funds and are including the parking garage in a new ballot measure this fall. There's another Sound Transit garage proposed for Sumner that would be located at the bottom of Lake Tapps Parkway, if successful it would take pressure off Auburn's downtown parking garage. King County Metro has also talking to the City about a project that would add more parking downtown.
- ***The storm drainage ponds located on 130th Avenue haven't been maintained since the City annexed them; there are also some dangerous alder trees behind the home at 12913 SE 309th Place that need to be dealt with.***
The City is still determining the locations of and who has responsibility for the storm drainage ponds in the newly annexed areas of Lea Hill and West Hill. City staff will check into the ponds on 130th Avenue and the alder trees behind 12913 SE 309th Place.

Development Related Questions/Comments

- ***Are there more four-story residential/shopping complexes in the pipeline for Lea Hill?***
There are a few more short plats already approved by King County prior to the annexation. The lower portion of the Yarrow Bay development, the NW corner of the new roundabout and the triangle by 304th and 342nd will include more commercial development. At the time of annexation City Council had tentatively approved additional commercial areas, but after holding a series of public meetings and hearing public comments against commercial areas, Council limited the commercial areas by the fire station and triangle area near Highway 18.
- Concerns were raised about the Brandon Meadows development; drivers are almost getting hit because the developer keeps taking more and more road away.***
The City will contact the developer (Joe Singh) and inform him he either needs to finish the street or finish the project with a half-street improvement; it's been left unfinished long enough and the residents need the road to be completed.

Police Related Questions/Comments

- ***Are there plans to locate a precinct station on Lea Hill for Police?***
It isn't necessary because all Police cars are outfitted with laptop computers so they can stay connected and remain out in the field where they are most needed.

- ***There's been a recent rash of break-ins. Kids have been partying in the wee hours of the morning (2 a.m.) keeping residents up at night. Also, what should citizens do when they hear gunshots?***

Residents were encouraged to report everything to 9-1-1. You should call 9-1-1 whenever you have an emergency, need to speak with an officer or file a report (our **online reporting system** at www.auburnwa.gov is available 24 hours a day for your convenience).

Auburn shares ownership of the 9-1-1 system and the calls go into a dispatch center so residents shouldn't worry about tying up the phone line when making non-emergency calls. When you call 9-1-1 it will be answered by a "Call Receiver." The Call Receiver will determine whether or not your call is an emergency to be handled right away or to have an officer make contact with you to file a non-emergency report. They will ask questions which are specifically designed to obtain information so that the proper response can be taken for your call.

Residents are advised to call 9-1-1 for any emergency or non-emergency issue such as street lights out, stop lights out, missing stop signs, fireworks, loose dogs, sewer backups, water leaks, etc. Please note: If calling from a cell phone you need to ask for an "Auburn Call Receiver."

Sgt. Jim Nordinger, the District Sergeant for Lea Hill, was introduced; Sgt. Nordinger and his patrol officers will be responding to the Lea Hill 9-1-1 calls. Patrol officers will be oriented to the location of Willow Park for future reference.

Mayor Lewis pointed out that Police average response times for first priority calls are down to 3.01 minutes, which is very good.

- Asst. Chief Karnofski explained how the Auburn Police Department functions and Officer Andy Gould gave a brief overview of how Block Watch works. It's built on the concept of neighbors watching out for each other because you know better than anyone else who belongs in your neighborhood and who doesn't. If you think "maybe I should call 9-1-1 about this," you should. Residents were encouraged to call him if they want to set up a Block Watch.
- The City has hired new Parking Enforcement Officers so you can report parking violations to the Police Department. Just be careful what you ask for because when they are in the neighborhood they will ticket everyone in violation of a parking ordinance.

Traffic Related Questions/Comments

- ***Due to the development by 130th Ave SE, drivers are beginning to cut through the neighborhood to 132nd Ave SE; what can the City do to deter this and reduce traffic speeds?***

The City will need to hold an additional meeting to determine what's best for the entire neighborhood. Some traffic calming suggestions could include using speed trailers/radar signs to increase awareness and/or install temporary speed cushions.

- ***Is the City making money on the PhotoSAFE cameras at intersections and in school zones?***

The reason the City of Auburn implemented the PhotoSAFE program was to reduce or eliminate the number of T-bone accidents in intersections, which has definitely been accomplished. The City doesn't actually make much money from the tickets once the City pays the organization responsible for the system and pays for the additional Court staff needed to process the tickets. Council had decided to put the money the City does keep into a designated fund to help cover the cost of our neighborhood traffic calming program.

The Mayor spoke about the new Tim Eyman Initiative 985 that would take income the cities are currently receiving from PhotoSAFE and give it to the State instead. This would be extremely harmful to our citizens as this is the main source of revenue the City has to pay for its neighborhood traffic calming program.

Mayor Lewis shared that out of each family's property tax bill only 15.8% goes to the City; a majority of it goes to the School District and the State. Mayor also informed the group that contrary to what most people believe, traffic tickets don't produce much revenue for the City.

- There was a complaint that kids are racing down 130th Ave SE from 304th to 309th.
- Complaints or comments about the state highways should be phoned into or emailed to your State Representative.

Summary of Solutions Discussed/Action Items

- City staff will check into the ponds on 130th Avenue and the alder trees behind 12913 SE 309th Place.
- The City will contact the developer (Joe Singh) and inform him he either needs to finish the street or finish the project with a half-street improvement.
- Patrol officers will be oriented to the location of Willow Park for future reference.
- The City will need to hold an additional meeting to determine neighborhood wide traffic issues and the best solutions for the entire neighborhood. A second follow up meeting at a larger venue should be held after school starts; it was suggested the City invite the elementary school principal to attend too. This would be one of the City's larger format community meetings with representatives from various departments.